

Second Concept - *The final responsibility and authority for NA services rests with the NA groups.*

The NA service structure has been created by the groups to serve the common needs of the groups. Our fellowship's service boards and committees exist to help groups share their experience with one another, provide tools which help groups function better, attract new members to group recovery meetings, and carry the NA message further than any single group could carry it alone. Because the groups have created the service structure, they have final authority over all its affairs. By the same token, the groups also have the final responsibility for the support of all its activities. The two go hand in hand.

Ideally, responsibility and authority are flip sides of the same coin; the exercise of one is also an exercise of the other. When our groups provide the resources—conscience and ideas, people, money—needed to fulfill NA services, they also provide direction to the service structure. Let's take a look at a few examples of how this principle works.

The most important resource contributed to the service structure by an NA group is almost exclusively spiritual: its ideas and its conscience. Without the voice of the groups, the service structure may not know what kinds of services are needed, or whether the services it provides are ones the groups want. The groups provide the ideas and direction needed to guide the service structure in fulfilling its responsibilities. By voicing their needs and concerns, the groups also exercise their authority for the service structure they have created.

The people who give their time to service work are a vital resource; without them, our service boards and committees would not exist, much less be able to serve. The group's responsibility to the service structure is to elect a group service representative who will serve the best interests of the group and the entire NA Fellowship. By carefully selecting its GSR, then providing that person with regular support and guidance, the group exercises its ability to impact NA services, both directly and indirectly. In choosing a qualified GSR, then sending him or her out to serve on the group's behalf, the group fulfills a large part of both its responsibility and authority for NA services.

Money is required to fulfill NA services. Without it, our phonelines would be closed down, our meeting lists would not be printed, there would be no NA literature to distribute, our H&I panels would go without pamphlets, and our public information workers would be unable to provide printed materials about our fellowship to the community. In the Eleventh Concept, more will be said of the use of money in fulfilling our primary purpose. The message of the Second Concept in regard to money, however, is simple: Since the groups have created the service structure to perform certain tasks, the groups are also responsible to provide the necessary funds.

So far, we've looked at what the Second Concept says to the NA group. This concept also speaks to the service structure. The groups have, directly or indirectly, created every one of our service boards and committees. The NA groups have, directly or indirectly, provided the resources used by those service boards and committees. The groups have established the service structure as a medium through which, together, they can better fulfill our fellowship's primary purpose. Therefore, in all the affairs of all its elements, the service structure must carefully consider the needs and desires of the groups. The Second Concept can be seen as the groups' way of saying to the NA service structure, "Be responsible with the spiritual, personal, and financial resources we have provided you. Seek our advice; do not ignore our direction."

The NA groups bear the final authority in all our fellowship's service affairs, and should be routinely consulted in all matters directly affecting them. For example, proposals to change NA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, name, nature, or purpose should be approved directly by the groups. Conversely, if something goes wrong in the service structure, NA groups are responsible to take constructive steps to help correct the problem. Our experience shows that radical action, taken in haste, serves neither the groups nor our services well. Since change rarely occurs overnight, patience and acceptance may be called for. Nonetheless, the exercise of final authority for NA services, a vital part of the system of service established by our fellowship, is both the right and the responsibility of the groups.

Study and discussion questions

1. Does your group have any way of letting your area committee know whether it's meeting your needs? How?

2. Does your group's GSR regularly take part in ASC meetings? Do you regularly contribute to the ASC? Do these things give your group any say about the way NA services are administered? How?

3. How frequently is your group consulted on service matters by the ASC? The RSC? The WSC? Do you want to be consulted more often? Less often?

4. What does the Second Concept say to our service boards and committees? Does your group believe that message is heard and understood by our service structure? If not, what can your group do about it?
